

Γ1. Essay

Useful tips

A discursive essay is a formal piece of writing. This means that there are certain things you should or shouldn't do.

Do

- use formal connectors / linking words to make your writing coherent (e.g. Consequently, In other words, Furthermore,)
- use passive voice and impersonal expressions (e.g. it is believed that..., it is an undisputed fact that...)
- use inversion (e.g. Little do we realize..., Not until..., In very few cases ...)
- use advanced vocabulary (e.g. a highly debatable issue, to exert influence, to make informed decisions, deeply ingrained beliefs)

Don't

- use contractions or short forms (e.g. I don't believe, there aren't many...)
- use colloquial or idiomatic expressions (e.g. I don't get it, it doesn't make sense)
- use simple vocabulary repeatedly (e.g. say, tell, think, good, bad, very; 'claim' can be used instead of 'say')
- use 'think' instead of 'consider', 'good' instead of 'positive', etc.)
- use simple connectors / linking words too often (e.g. and, but, too, also, so, because)

Useful phrases & expressions

To list points:

First of all, To begin/start with, Secondly, Thirdly, Finally,

To introduce examples:

for example, for instance, like, such as, in particular, This is clearly illustrated by, A typical/striking example of (this)

To explain sth:

this/which means that, in other words, meaning that, that is to say

Agreeing partially:

this is partly true, to a certain/some extent, in some cases, up to a point, while it cannot be denied that..., while it is true that...

Introducing arguments/viewpoints:

One argument in favor of / against ... is
It is widely believed/claimed that...
It can/could be argued that...
It is generally believed/maintained that...
Experts/Scientists believe that...
Many people support the view / feel / claim / maintain that...
Some people are in favor of / against / opposed to

Giving opinions

- In my opinion/view, ...
- My opinion is that...
- I feel/think/believe that...
- I am inclined to believe that...
- It seems/appears to me that...
- I am (not) convinced that...
- As far as I am concerned...

Linking Words / Phrases

To show addition: in addition (to), moreover, also, furthermore, apart from, besides, as well as, both...and

To express cause: because (of), due to, owing to, since, as, given (that)

To show result: thus, therefore, as a result/consequence, for this reason, consequently

To express reality: in fact, it is a fact that, actually, in practice

To emphasize a point: clearly, obviously, it is obvious, needless to say

To show contrast: although, (even) though, while, whereas, despite, in spite of the fact that, however, on the other hand, nevertheless, yet, still
+ it may be argued/claimed that,
others feel/claim/believe that

Conclusions:

In conclusion,
On balance,
All things considered,
Taking everything into account/consideration,
To sum up,
To conclude,
All in all,
In the light of this evidence,
it seems/appears that...
it may be concluded that...
there is little doubt that...
it is likely/unlikely that...
it is clear/obvious/evident that...
the obvious conclusion to be drawn is...
there is no absolute answer to the question of...

Try using a variety of words with similar meanings to express what you want to write.

- **important:** essential - crucial - imperative - vital - significant
- **very:** greatly - considerably - severely - extremely - excessively - immensely - highly
- **bad:** negative - adverse - contrary - unfavorable - opposing - harmful
- **understand:** comprehend - grasp - perceive - realize - recognize
- **good:** satisfactory - beneficial - acceptable - excellent - positive - valuable
- **believe:** maintain - think - feel - claim - argue
- **dangerous:** alarming - risky - hazardous - critical - serious - perilous

BRAINSTORMING

Finding arguments is usually one of the most time-consuming steps of writing an essay. You should use at least 10 minutes to come up with ideas on what to write, and it is useful to have a set of angles, which can help you when thinking about your topic. When you are brainstorming you can examine your topic from one of the following angles:

Educational

Example: From an educational point of view, computers are useful in the classroom as a teaching tool, since they give students the opportunity to find useful information on the Internet, thus promoting student autonomy.

Health

Example: As far as health is concerned, it can be argued that using a car has contributed to the poor fitness levels and sedentary lives of the majority of city-dwellers.

Social

Example: With regard to the social aspect of computers, it is an undeniable fact that they are to a large extent responsible for the alienation and isolation experienced by most people in modern-day society.

Economic

Example: From an economic viewpoint, smoking adds an extra expense to the smokers' budget, since its cost can be quite significant if estimated on a monthly basis.

Ethical

Example: From an ethical standpoint, experimenting with any living creature may equal the capture, torture and even murder of this being.

Political

Example: Many support the view that politically, England and Scotland should remain united.

Scientific

Example: According to most scientific research, it won't be long before global warming becomes irreversible.

Historical

Example: History generally maintains that the first civilized societies evolved in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Psychological

Example: It cannot be denied that stress and overwork have a damaging psychological effect on many people, causing negative attitudes and even depression.

Note: There are further angles you could add to this list e.g. personal, geographical, environmental etc.

Sample Model Essay

**“Smoking should be illegal.” Do you agree with the following statement?
Write an essay giving your opinion on this issue.**

(Note the use of the highlighted phrases and expressions.)

Your text should include the following issues:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| a. Smoking and health | c. Costs of treating smoking related illnesses |
| b. Passive smoking | d. Freedom of choice regarding smoking |

While most people would agree that smoking is a habit with harmful effects on our health, the number of smokers around the world is on the increase, as are the profits of the tobacco industry. **Clearly,** smokers are far from willing to give up on their habit, but is instant gratification actually worth the risks involved? **It is my opinion the answer to this question is** ‘no’. **In fact, I am inclined to believe that** smoking should be illegal for a number of reasons.

To begin with, smoking is harmful to your health. **Research has shown that** smokers are at a greater risk of developing serious health problems, such as heart disease and lung cancer. **This is particularly true for people who** have been smoking from a young age for a long period of time. Even on a daily basis, however, smokers experience symptoms like shortness of breath, fatigue or respiratory problems.

Furthermore, there has been growing concern about the effects of passive smoking. **Recent research has shown that** non-smokers can suffer health problems if they spend long periods of time among people who do smoke. **A striking example of this** is children growing up in a home where either one or both parents smoke.

Finally, another serious issue that must be considered is the huge financial burden governments have to carry because of smoking. **Given the** ever-increasing number of smokers with health problems who are in need of medical treatment or hospitalization, **it is clear that** this enormous cost will ultimately end up afflicting the taxpayers.

In contrast, there are those who claim that people should have the right to choose whether to smoke or not. Smokers are aware of the implications, still, their personal decision on the issue deserves to be respected. **Provided they** do not smoke in places where non-smokers are present, they should not be denied the right to smoke themselves.

Taking everything into account, it seems to me that the world would be a better place without cigarettes. No one has the right to self-destruction, especially if one considers that non-smokers suffer the consequences of this dangerous habit as well. Banning smoking would thus not be a violation of rights, but rather an attempt to protect everyone’s health.